

VERMONT
COMMISSION
ON
NATIVE
AMERICAN
| AFFAIRS



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COMMISSION

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 VERMONT
VCNAA Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Lucy Cannon-Neel, Chair; Jeffrey Benay, Vice-Chair; Carol Irons, Paul Fassler, Joelen Mulvaney and Trudy Ann Parker.

Members Absent: Walker Brook, Cheryl O'Neill

Guests: John Moody, Sharon; Rich Holschuh, Brattleboro; Donald Parker, Lunenburg; Charlie Delaney-Megeso; Nulhegan-Coosuk; Jenni Lavoie; VDHP.

The meeting was brought to order by Chair Lucy Cannon-Neel at 1:00 pm at 115 State Street, Room 10.

1. Changes to the Agenda

Joelen Mulvaney noted a change in the wording of action plan item c. The wording should read; Dept. of Health – Native Style treatment and recovery program in Swanton for alcohol and opiate addiction.

Under new business, #4 Vermont Dignity in Schools Coalition would be discussed as item 2.

2. Public Comment

Charlie Delaney-Megeso asked about the native based recovery and treatment programs, if there was a specific program that the commission had in mind. Lucy Cannon-Neel advised that the program was a new goal just created at the October meeting and more specific details will be forthcoming.

Rich Holschuh inquired about contact information for the tribes. He would like to communicate the information about the Dam relicensing to the tribes. Lucy advised that the Division for Historic Preservation has contact information and would share that with him. Rich also advised that the town of Vernon is looking for a natural gas plant to build next to the defunct Yankee Power and tap into the existing grid. He will be attending a hearing on the matter to make sure all parties are aware of the cultural significance of the area.

John Moody expressed the good news that due to the great work of the Abenaki Coalition, the Federal Government is creating a process of evaluating sacred sites. John also advised that Iberdrola has announced their plans for creating the largest wind farm in Vermont or New Hampshire history on ridgelines in the Grafton and Windham, VT area.

3. Approve October 14, 2015 Minutes

Joelen Mulvaney asked if “In Swanton” could be added to item 3 listed under goal setting. Carol Irons also noted that Abenaki Heritage was tabled from last month and was not listed on the agenda. Lucy Cannon-Neel advised that Abenaki Heritage would fall under another action plan item. No other changes were noted. Consensus was reached to approve the October 14, 2015 minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Rich Holschuh – Website

Rich Holschuh gave a summary of what had been discussed at the last meeting regarding the website and that the topic had been tabled until this month to give commission members an opportunity to view the page. Several commission members expressed that they have indeed viewed the page. After thorough discussion, commission members reached a consensus to have the page go live, with the caveat that the topic can be revisited in the coming months if needed.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Cultural Environmental Conference

Charlie Delaney-Megeso provided commission members with his vision for a Cultural Environmental Conference. The conference would bring together men, women, children and young people from across the state and tribal affiliations, who could share cultural, medicinal and spiritual beliefs, ideas, and knowledge. Commission members expressed a strong interest in Charlie’s idea, but were concerned about the logistics of bringing the idea to fruition. Charlie advised he would create documentation as a starting point and bring that information to a future meeting for the commissions review.

2. Vermont Dignity in Schools Coalition

Jeff Benay provided the commission information about the Vermont Dignity in Schools Coalition. The coalition was created last year after disturbing data was released regarding the high suspension and expulsion rate for African American and Native American children. After discussion relating to a commission member attending the meetings, it was decided that Jeff would attend the next meeting and bring back more information to the commission.

Lucy Cannon-Neel moved to break at 2:24pm. The meeting resumed at 2:39pm.

3. Goal Setting

Commission members felt this topic had been satisfied at the October meeting.

4. Action Plan

a. Train the Trainer

This goal was created to train specific people how to write and apply for grants. The selection of a committee was tabled until next month.

b. Developing Teaching Materials

This goal is to develop curriculum around cultural skills that will encompass written and physical lessons that work together. Carol Irons will chair this committee, with members Trudy, Paul and Walker.

c. Dept. of Health – Native Style Treatment / Recovery Program for Alcohol and Opiate Addiction in Swanton

Joelen Mulvaney will chair this committee that will seek to create native style treatment and recovery programs for alcohol and opiate addictions, based out of Swanton.

d. Higher Education Scholarships

This goal is to broaden awareness of higher education scholarships that are available to native children. The selection of a committee for this goal was tabled until next month.

e. Statewide Title VII

A tentative committee was formed of Lucy Cannon-Neel, Jeff Benay, John Moody and Walker Brook. This committee will strive to have the Title VII program in schools across the state.

f. Improve Communication with Tribes

This goal is to have more transparency, input and communication with the four recognized tribes and native people. A tentative committee was formed of Rich Holschuh and Jenni Lavoie.

5. Announcements

Lucy Cannon-Neel advised no meeting will be held in December. The next meeting will be Wednesday, January 13, 2016.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 3:45pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Lavoie